

Sensitive Vegetation in the Northern Territory

Riparian Vegetation

What is riparian vegetation?

Riparian vegetation is a distinct forest community occurring on the banks of rivers or streams that directly influences the adjacent water body.

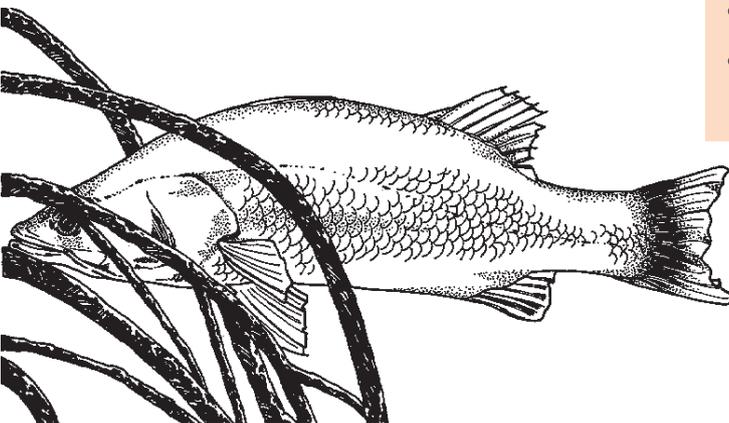
Why is riparian vegetation significant?

Riparian vegetation shades and moderates temperature fluctuations in streams, creating suitable conditions for breeding in many aquatic species; maintaining dissolved oxygen levels; and restricting the occurrence of algal blooms.

Riparian vegetation can also protect stream banks from erosion and filter any sediment or nutrients in overland flow before the flow enters the stream, thus reducing sedimentation of aquatic habitats and reducing nutrient induced algal blooms.

These areas have higher moisture and shade levels and more productive organic soils compared to surrounding woodlands and thus support a distinct suite of plant and animal species, as well as providing an important refuge for woodland species during the dry season. Snags from fallen trees also create valuable fish habitat.

Riparian vegetation is vulnerable to disturbances such as weed invasion, feral animals, fire, over-grazing, erosion, development and tourism.



Snags from fallen trees create valuable fish habitat

Benefits of retaining riparian vegetation

There are many benefits from managing and retaining riparian vegetation, including:

- stabilising banks and reducing erosion;
- improving water quality by filtering terrestrial runoff;
- supporting terrestrial and aquatic habitats by maintaining natural light, temperature and oxygen levels within waterways;
- providing natural structure for fish through the delivery of dead branches and other vegetative material,
- maintaining natural levels of nutrients and food entering waterways;
- promoting a healthy landscape to help support the natural environment, horticulture and agriculture; and
- minimising costs associated with remedial measures.

What can we do to conserve riparian vegetation?

Disturbances can be minimised through actions such as:

- retaining vegetation buffers around riparian vegetation.
- implementing erosion and sediment control measures.
- fencing to control stock access.
- weed and feral animal control.
- appropriate site selection and management of vehicle crossings.

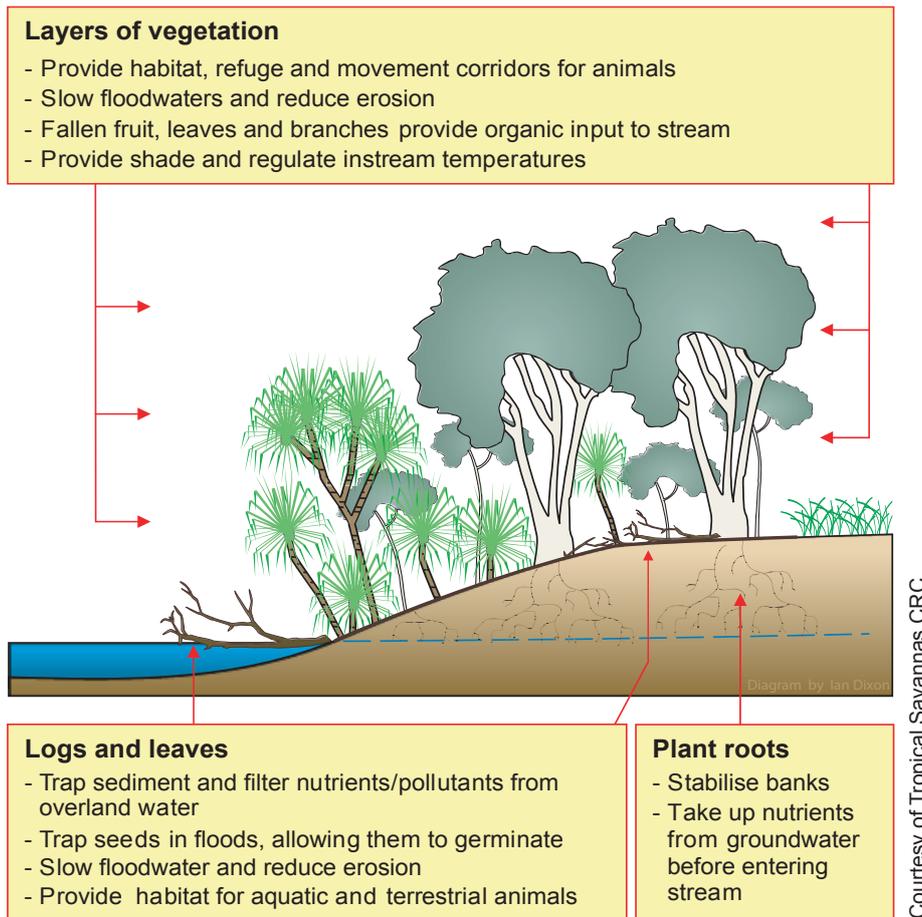


Figure 1. Features of riparian vegetation

References and Further Reading

Land Clearing Guidelines

nt.gov.au/property/land-clearing/apply-to-clear-freehold-land

Sites of Conservation Significance

nt.gov.au/environment/environment-data-maps/important-biodiversity-conservation-sites/conservation-significance-list

Threatened Species

denr.nt.gov.au/about/flora-and-fauna-division

Northern Territory Planning Scheme

nt.gov.au/property/building-and-development/northern-territory-planning-scheme

Other Fact Sheets in this series

Monsoon Rainforest
Sandsheet Heath
Mangrove Forest
Old-Growth Forest

Further Information

Department of Environment
and Natural Resources

Rangelands Division

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nt.gov.au/environment/soil-land-vegetation/native-vegetation

Flora and Fauna Division

Ph: 08 8995 5000

denr.nt.gov.au/about/flora-and-fauna-division